

“Electric” Etric: Sir, Social Media Fort Irwin?

BG Robert Abrams: Well you know, we are not at the fore front but we are because we’ve got a great impetus across the Army to use social media, and I am by no means an expert but I will tell you that there is great power for us because of our remote location and our ability to communicate using a combination of Facebook and Twitter primarily to help message to the community. It’s a way to quickly get out short bursts of information on what’s going on. Road closures, if there’s an incident or an accident. You know, I think back, probably about 3 weeks ago before the rotation started, there was a stoppage at the gate. We had some pyrotechnics being brought into the installation, the vehicle was not properly marked, they didn’t have their papers, they didn’t have the proper identification and our DES took the exact right precautionary measures. I mean, they stopped traffic in both directions for safety. They knew there was some sort of explosives, until somebody could verify what the story was. That’s an opportunity for us then to leverage social media to quickly send out an update because I don’t know, we block traffic for about fifty minutes so conservatively, there were about one hundred cars lined up heading south on Fort Irwin Road, and I know there was some frustration, but if we can leverage our social media for instance follow NTC update, I think that’s what its called, on Twitter, you like me would of got an immediate message as to what’s going on and it’s just another way to leverage what we have to message and get the word out on things. When we make last minute changes, you know we had published the National Prayer Breakfast on Monday, the original plan was to do it at 6:30 (a.m.) and I said no we are not going to do it at 6:30 they hadn’t cleared that with me I said no we going to do PT that morning, but we will do it at 8:00 (a.m.) and that would give everybody a chance to go do PT before we rolled in for the National Prayer Breakfast. So, leveraging flyers had been posted and so forth. So in order to get the word out, it’s a great tool from a Command Information perspective to be able to get the word out and share things that are going on. We are making progress, I don’t know what the exact numbers are that are following on Twitter or Facebook and I’ve had peaks and valleys on my own personal. I do Twitter, I am Irwinlead6, so if you want to follow what the CG’s got on his mind and thinking, by all means follow me on Twitter with Irwinlead6. You’ll see my picture, I even figured out how to post my picture on my Twitter account, so I was pretty excited to figure out how to do that. I do not Facebook. It’s not that I’m anti Facebook but to be honest with you, I would have difficulty finding time to be able to connect and I know other senior commanders use it as a means of communicating. I have checked out some of them and I think more often than not, they have someone else who actually does the response and the writing on Facebook within their intent, but I don’t have someone Twittering for me. I mean, I do it. I do it myself. I just pull out my old iphone if I have something on my mind like I did this morning, and I’ll just send out messages. It’s my own personal style and I wouldn’t want to out source the CG’s Facebook. I would want to do it myself.

“Electric” Etric: Lead 6 Twitters?

BG Robert Abrams: Lead 6 does Twitter. Lead 6 follows a lot of people and I will tell you it’s a fantastic medium. I am college basketball (fan)... I’m a sports fan, but I’m a college basketball fanatic for the University of Kentucky Wildcats. I have been since 97

and you know their new coach this year John Calaperi, he Twitters. It's a fact he's got over a million followers.

"Electric" Etric: Wow!

BG Robert Abrams: And it's really fantastic because he does, he takes the time to communicate with what is affectionately referred to as The Big Blue Nation. It's a great thing. He keeps us plugged in, and he tells us what's on his mind, what's kind of going on with the team. He alerts us when he's going to do interviews or things like that or a sports show, but he also does it to help message about the commonwealth of Kentucky and other things going on. His way of supporting the university, and it's just a great way to message. And so, you got a leader and basketball in Kentucky is in many cases is probably more important than religion unfortunately, but it's their religion. Yea and so when you got the head basketball coach at the University of Kentucky who he says hey, isn't it great that the women's basketball team just won their 5th in a row. I mean, he is helping to promote his institution there at the university. But that's just one example of leveraging social media to help inform people who have common interest.

"Electric" Etric: If you are interested, by the way, in the Fort Irwin Facebook or Twitter page, Mr. Charles Melton is the point of contact here to walk you through it. His point of contact number is 380--7724 he says. And, he will get you started on that. Another tool in regard to command information is the command television channel on channel 18. You have to have cable but it's new and up and running sir.

BG Robert Abrams: It is.. it is and I was in the gym yesterday and they have cable there so I was able to check it out. It's pretty good. The garrison, I applaud Colonel Chevallier and the team here in the Public Affairs Office for stepping out. I think it's a great idea, long over due. It's one of the things I asked Colonel Chevallier about when I got here almost a year ago and said hey we ought to figure out how to get that ginned up. With all things, with a little work and a little resourcing are possible so it's another means of helping to communicate all the great things. NTC update though is following that is a fantastic tool because FMWR also Twitters and you can follow them as well to get the latest and greatest on the events that are coming up and things that are going on, on the installation that are in support of Morale Welfare and Recreation. It is, it's a great tool and I hope that more people will sign up. Twitter is easy. I was a little intimidated initially but it's not that difficult. You can do it from your desk top and then you're on. It goes right to your cell phone and it's a piece of cake. Doesn't cost you anything.

"Electric" Etric: Yea...I am also a little hesitant to join, but Mr. Melton has been working on me.